

# DHS Matters!

Michigan Department of Human Services • Lansing, Michigan • May 20, 2005  
Produced by DHS Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing  
Submit stories by e-mail to [DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov](mailto:DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov)

**Today's big story**



Children of Allegan County DHS employees at "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day" April 28

## Take our daughters and sons to work day in Allegan County

From Regina Ambs, Adoption Worker  
Allegan County DHS, Allegan  
[AmbsR@michigan.gov](mailto:AmbsR@michigan.gov)

The Allegan County Department of Human Services participated in "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day" on April 28, sponsored by the Ms. Foundation for Women. The office provided a full day of scheduled activities for our children. Twenty children attended our event ranging in age from 7-12.

The day began with a continental breakfast and an opportunity to have pictures taken with parents/sponsors. Then the children participated in "The Interview Game" in which they interviewed their parents regarding job duties and presented the information from the interviews to parents and children in attendance.

After a pizza lunch, the highlight of the afternoon included a visit with Allegan County Family and Probate Court Judge Michael Buck. He provided the opportunity for the children to learn more about the court system with hands-on experience such as sitting at the witness stand and even sitting in the Judge's chair! There were also tours of the Allegan County Youth Home and its Cheever Treatment Center. This allowed the children to learn more about how DHS employees work with children and families.

The afternoon was concluded with a presentation from Jane Hart, Allegan's MSU Extension family & consumer sciences educator, regarding healthy eating for the children. Jane whipped up some yummy smoothies made of yogurt and blueberries. Each participating child received an official tee shirt with the slogan, "Sharing Power & Possibility."

Thanks go to [Stacy Flores](#), [LuAnn Smith](#) and [Regina Ambs](#) for planning and carrying out this year's event. Allegan County director [Susan Bailey-Carman](#) provided the continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Decorations were paid for through a casual day collection. Parents and Susan Bailey-Carman shared in the cost of the tee shirts.

*Click to read...*

Local office news..... 2-3

DHS people..... 2-3

Your letters ..... 4

## Charlevoix-Emmet DHS takes customer service to new heights

From Bill Denemy, Director  
Charlevoix-Emmet DHS  
[DenemyB@michigan.gov](mailto:DenemyB@michigan.gov)

Charlevoix-Emmet DHS representatives traveled by plane to Beaver Island April 29 to provide information and applications for Medicaid, Food Assistance, child day care and adult services.

Beaver Island, which is part of Charlevoix County, is 32 miles northwest of the county mainland in Lake Michigan. In the summer there are about 4,000 residents; about 550 of them remain year round.



It is really interesting to have an Island as part of your customer service area. This lends itself to unique operational

needs. Access to the Island is available by plane year-round and cruise ships in the summer months.

We have a working agreement with the county that allows us to borrow county cars while departmental staff visit the Island. We find office space as needed using the school and health facilities. The island residents are entitled to the same benefits and services as the mainland county residents and we must also insure that vulnerable children and adults are protected.

I can remember an incident when we received a CPS complaint that required immediate contact. The cruise ship was not running and the planes were fogged in. We were able to make contact with the single law enforcement officer that is housed on the island to initiate our investigation.

As you can imagine it is very important that positive working relationships with the island's professionals are maintained. Our child welfare staff visit the island regularly providing direct services to children and families in need while maintaining our P.A. 116 compliance (P.A. 116 of 1973 sets licensing standards for child welfare organizations).

Since the consolidation of the dual county operations into a single facility housed in Emmet County active efforts are maintained to ensure that Charlevoix county residents access to benefits have not been compromised both on the island and the mainland.

I am continually pleased and proud of the extra efforts, dedication, and compassion that this dual county staff promotes. I doubt anyone can beat the "height" of our customer service.

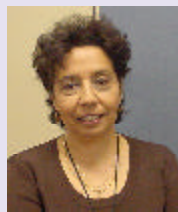


Charlevoix-Emmet staff members (pictured left to right) [Machele Faith](#), [Lana Oliver](#), [Lisa Thiel](#), and [Natalie Denemy](#) as they prepare to board the Island Airways "puddle jumper" that would be taking them to the island.

## Kent County staffer is ambassador for annual celebration

From Mary A. Schoen, Administrative Assistant  
Kent County DHS  
[SchoenM@michigan.gov](mailto:SchoenM@michigan.gov)

For several years running, [Ziyadah Shakir](#), family independence manager, has provided Kent County staff with interesting and enriching African American facts while incorporating everything into a fun and invigorating game.



**Ziyadah Shakir**

Each morning during February Ziyadah sent out a new question to staff by email. The questions were set up in a multiple choice format. There were 19 questions in all with two additional tiebreaker questions. There were gift card prizes for first, second and third place provided by Ziyadah herself.

Not only did staff learn African American history but they had friendly competitions going between co-workers to see who could get the most questions right. What a wonderful way to learn and have fun at the same time. This is just one more example of how DHS employees go the extra mile. Thank you Ziyadah!



## Eastern U.P. foster parent training & award banquet

By Terri L. Bush, Social Service Program Manager  
Mackinac/Cheboygan DHS – St. Ignace  
[BushT@michigan.gov](mailto:BushT@michigan.gov)

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Foster Parent Training Coalition held their annual Foster Parent Training & Banquet at the Kewadin Conference Center in Sault Ste. Marie on April 14. More than 73 foster parents and agency staff participated in six hours of training provided on topics including fostering the Native American child, trauma and loss, licensing issues and self-mutilation.



At the Eastern Upper Peninsula Foster Parent Training Coalition foster parent training and banquet April 14.

The foster parent award banquet was held during the noon meal. Guest speaker was Hon. Lowell Ulrich, Chippewa County Family Court judge. He praised foster parents for their commitment to children and stressed the important role they have as valued team members in the child welfare system. Foster parents received certificates of appreciation and special gifts donated by the community.

Participating agencies in the event include Alger-Schoolcraft, Cheboygan-Mackinac and Chippewa-Luce departments of Human Services, Bay Mills Indian Community, Sault Tribe-Binogii Placement Agency and the Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency.

## Employee: DHS equipped as single point of entry for long term care

**Barb Hustoles**, an adult services manager and former decade-long adult services specialist from Ionia-Montcalm DHS, submitted recommendations to DHS director Marianne Udow in her role as a member of the Governor's Long Term Care Task Force.

Hustoles suggested the DHS Adult Services Program could meet many goals of the task force and asked the task force to consider:

- The DHS Adult Services Program as the single point of entry into services statewide.
- The program is a way to maintain continuity for all Medicaid eligible clients.
- With 350 trained and degreed workers using person centered planning, the program is much of the way to the task force recommendation that there be 798 case managers statewide.
- Administratively, the program has a computer program to handle the caseload, a chain of command, and a hearing process in place.
- The Home Help Program was touted by the AARP evaluation as being a nationally recognized program.

"Barb provided the message as part of the public testimony segment of the Long Term Care Task Force and did an excellent job," said **Patrice Eller**, DHS deputy director for adult and family services. "She eloquently described the fine work of the Adult Services workers and how they should be considered as the single point of entry – a model where all Medicaid long term care programs would be administered by a single organizational structure to avoid fragmentation."

## Social service runs in the family

Like child, like parent? Does the tree not root far from where the apple falls? Can parents destiny be defined by their children?

Cayce Thill of Orem, Utah was awarded the "Foster Mother of the Year 2005" award for the western region of Utah May 13. The Utah Foster Care Foundation made the award to Thill, who with husband John have eight children – two by birth and six by adoption.



Cayce Thill with her award

Thill, 34, is the daughter of DHS employees **Suellyn** and **Larry VanDeSande**. Suellyn is an eligibility specialist at Ingham County DHS in Lansing and Larry is a member of the DHS Office of Communications staff.

Cayce and husband John both grew up near Lansing. They adopted two African American boys while living in Pontiac, Mich. They adopted the other four since moving to Utah and fostered all six before adopting.

The Thills, who recently added two bedrooms to their home, have advised the state of Utah they are now available to adopt an infant.

**Date:** April 8  
**To:** Karen Golejewski, Manager  
DHS Customer Service Unit  
**Subj:** Thank you

I am writing to thank you for your continued assistance with my constituent concerns. You have been tremendously helpful in our most recent case and previous constituent situations where we have sought your help. You have truly gone above and beyond the call of duty in your interactions with my office. It has been a pleasure to work with somebody as dedicated and talented as yourself. Once again, thank you for your continued support.

**Andrew E. Meisner**

State Representative

■ *Karen Golejewski manages the DHS Customer Service Unit in Lansing, which regularly interacts with elected officials on client matters. Rep. Meisner is from Ferndale.*

Your letters,  
intercepted  
and otherwise

**Date:** April 7  
**To:** Dianne Williams, Eligibility Specialist  
Lapeer County DHS, Lapeer  
**Subj:** Thanks for the help

Thanks so much for a nice smile and a warm personable attitude towards my situation. Believe me, it *does* help, as I'm sure there's many people who you interview that are feeling bad about themselves and their situation and quite simply, have no where else to turn. But all in all, it's nice to know that your caseworker does really care and he or she is there to *help*, not to discriminate. People like you make a difference in this world and I personally thank you for all your efforts and your professionalism. As hard as it may be to do your thankless job at times, keep up the good work and I thank you from all of us people who need an understanding mind throughout our times of misfortune. With your help, it will be better! Many thanks!

**Steven Campbell**

Dryden

■ *Brenda Buhl of Lapeer DHS submitted this letter, from one of Dianne Williams' clients. "It's wonderful the (DHS) recognizes employees such as Dianne Williams for putting forth that little extra effort in letting people like myself feel that she actually cares and understands our situation," Campbell said. "I feel she is a class act and couldn't ask for a better or more comfortable caseworker.*

Important warm weather dates:

- Memorial Day May 30
- Statewide Casual Day June 3
- Whenever the kids start driver's training!
- Independence Day on July 4
- My summer vacation

**Date:** March 18  
**To:** Larry Christ, Family Independence Manager  
Macomb County DHS Warren District Office  
**Subj:** John Fanelli

I have worked with John Fanelli on several Medicaid cases during the past year. I have found him to be conscientious, knowledgeable and always willing to answer questions that arise. His professionalism and dedication are to be commended. The (Department of Human Services) is fortunate to have Mr. Fanelli on its staff.

**Christopher B. Kroll**

Elder Law Solutions, Shelby Township

■ *Warren District office manager Judith Williams submitted this letter. John Fanelli is an eligibility specialist.*

**DHS Matters!** is a product of  
Michigan Department of Human Services  
Marianne Udow, Director  
Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications  
Larry VanDeSande, editor  
Submit stories by e-mail to:  
**[DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov](mailto:DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov)**

Customer letters praising employees are very popular with other employees.  
To submit a customer letter for publication:

1. Ensure that your supervisor knows about it and approves.
2. Have the customer sign Consent for Publication form, which is downloadable from the MS Word template as form 0199.dot
3. Send the letter and a copy of the signed consent form by e-mail to [VanDeSandeL@michigan.gov](mailto:VanDeSandeL@michigan.gov) or by fax to Larry VanDeSande at 517-373-8471.
4. Include the letter writer's hometown and the job classification(s) of the employee(s) cited in the letter.

We'll contact you if there are any questions.